

Newberry

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## <sup>135</sup> **F Kicking off Older Americans Month**

The kickoff for Older Americans Month is scheduled for Monday, 9:30 a.m. during WKDK's "On the Move with Margaret" broadcast.

Curtis M. Loftis Jr., director, Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging, will make a special appearance to discuss the aging network and its impact on seniors in South Carolina. Lynn Stockman, executive director, Newberry County Council on Aging, will discuss the local center and its plans for senior activities that observe the annual celebration.

Curtis Loftis explains that South Carolina is on the cusp of major changes as the number of its older citizens is doubling. This demographic change is due to South Carolina's portion of the 78 million

**ON AIR**

baby boomers nearing retirement age, as well as the immigration into our state of affluent mature adults from other sections of the country. To greet this age wave, which is predicted to double the number of people 65 and older from 660,000 to 1.3 million by 2020, the Governor and Legislature transferred the Office on Aging out of one of the largest state agencies into the direct, executive supervision of Lt. Governor Andre' Bauer.

A direct result is a geriatrician incentive program has been implemented that is serving as a national model on how to attract specialists to treat older patients. Twelve

geriatricians have been awarded incentives in the past year, contracted to stay in SC, and will treat our citizens for at least five years.

A federal major policy change is being implemented that modernizes the approach to aging by emphasizing individual responsibility and focuses upon home-and community based programs that can improve the quality of life and help our senior population age in their homes.

We are continuing our emphasis on wellness and prevention. Our evidence-based prevention and self-management programs, such as Living Well SC, can help persons with chronic disease improve their quality of life

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and prevent further progression of their disease. We are also creating fall-prevention programs that have been shown to reduce the risk of falling.

One in seven seniors in SC lives below the poverty level. Almost one in four women 60 years or older lives at or below the poverty level. Seniors are the fastest-growing debtors in the US. There are a variety of reasons for this increasing debt, such as insufficient funds for retirement, low interest rates, climbing medical bills, and major home repairs. Seniors who find themselves in financial crisis may seek debt counseling and take advantage of homestead tax exemption, reverse mortgages and prescription drug and energy assistance.

Lynn Stockman will talk about the Newberry County Council on Aging and what it can do for seniors. Their services offer home delivered meals to frail, home-bound seniors Monday through Friday by dedicated volunteers. Home care by certified care aides provide assistance with light housekeeping tasks, shopping and non-medical personal care to disabled

older individuals. Senior Centers provide a place where seniors can participate in various activities and also social support, health screening and nutritious noon meals to persons 60 years or older. NCCOA has three senior centers: Dave C. Waldrop, Jr., Bush River, in Newberry and Baker in Whitmire. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program has volunteers who serve through nonprofit, private and public community organizations. Adult Day Health Care is offered five days per week specializing with Alzheimer's disease, related dementias and short-term respite. Telephone Reassurance sponsors Project Near, a cooperative effort between NCCOA's RSVP program and the Newberry County Sheriffs Dept. provides daily calls to frail elders who live alone. Information and Referral information dissemination to and referrals made for older adults concerning services to meet their needs. Legal Services provide legal aid to seniors through collaboration of NCCOA staff and the Columbia Urban League. Medical Transportation is a service where NCCOA provides non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid eligible clients through a federally funded program. Private-pay services are also available.